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THE

Distrest Mother.

A

TRAGEDY.

As it is acted at the

THEATRE-ROYAL

IN

DRURY-LANE.

BY HIS

MAJESTY'S SERVANTS.

Written by Mr. *PHILIPS*.

DUBLIN:

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To Her GRACE the

Dutchess of MONTAGUE.

MADAM,

THIS Tragedy, which I do myself the Honour to dedicate to Your GRACE, is formed upon an Original, which passes for the most finished Piece, in this kind of Writing, that has ever been produced in the FRENCH Language. The principal Action and main distress of the Play is of such a Nature, as seems more immediately to claim the Patronage of a Lady: And when I consider the great and shining Characters of Antiquity, that are celebrated in it, I am naturally directed to inscribe it to a Person, whose Illustrious Father has, by a long Series of glorious Actions, (for the Service of his Country, and in Defence of the Liberties of EUROPE) not only surpassed the Generals of his own Time, but equal'd the greatest Heroes of former Ages. The Name of HECTOR could not be more terrible to the GREEKS, than that of the Duke of MARLBOROUGH has been to the FRENCH.

DEDICATION.

The refined Taste You are known to have in all Entertainments for the Diversion of the Public, and the peculiar Life and Ornament Your Presence gives to all Assemblies, was no small Motive to determine me in the Choice of my Patroness. The Charms, that shine out in the Person of Your GRACE, may convince every one, that there is nothing unnatural in the Power which is ascribed to the Beauty of ANDROMACHE.

The strict Regard I have had to Decency and good manners throughout this Work, is the greatest Merit I pretend to plead in Favour of my Presumption; and is, I am sensible, the only Argument, that can recommend it most effectually to Your Protection.

I am, with the greatest Respect,

MADAM,

Your GRACE's most Humble

and most Obedient Servant,

AMBR. PHILIPS.

THE
P R E F A C E.

I N all the works of genius and invention, whether in verse or prose, there are in general but three Manners of style: the one sublime and full of majesty; the other simple, natural, and easy; and the third, swelling, forced and unnatural. An injudicious affection of sublimity is what has betrayed a great many authors into the latter; not considering that real greatness in writing, as well as in manners, consists in an unaffected simplicity. The true sublime does not lie in strained metaphors and the pomp of words; but rises out of noble sentiments and strong images of nature, which will always appear the more conspicuous, when the language does not swell to hide and overshadow them.

These are the considerations that have induced me to write this tragedy in a style very different from what has been usually practised among us in poems of this nature: I have had the advantage to copy after a very great Master, whose writings are deservedly admired in all parts of *Europe*, and whose excellencies are too well known to the men of letters in this Nation, to stand in need of any further discovery of them here. If I have been able to keep up the beauties of Monsieur *Racine* in my attempt, and to do him no prejudice in the liberties I have taken frequently to vary from so great a poet, I shall have no reason to be dissatisfied with the labour it has cost me to bring the completest of his works upon the *English* stage.

I shall trouble my reader no farther, than to give him some short hints relating to this play from the preface of the *French* author. The following lines of *Virgil* mark out the scene, the action, and the four principal actors in this tragedy, together with their distinct characters excepting that of *Hermione*, whose rage and jealousy is sufficiently painted out in the *Andromache* of *Euripides*.

The PREFACE.

*Littoraque Epiri legimus, portuque subimus
 Chaonia, & celsam Butthroti ascendimus urbem—
 Sollemnes tum forte dapes, & trista dona
 Libabat cineri Andromache, Manesque vocabat
 Hectorum ad tumulum, viridi quem cespitem inanem,
 Et geminas, causam lacrymis, sacraverat aras—
 Dejecit vultum, & demissa voce locuta est:
 O Felix una ante alias Priameia virgo,
 Hostilem ad tumulum, Trojæ sub manibus altis
 Jussa meri! quæ sortitus non pertulit ullos,
 Nec victoris heri tetigit captivæ cubile.
 Nos patria incensa, diversa per æquora vectæ,
 Stirpis Achilleæ fastus, Juvenemque superbum
 Servitio enixe tulimus, qui deinde secutus
 Ledaam Hermionem, Lacedæmoniesque hymenæos—
 Ast illum ereptæ magno inflammatus amore
 Conjugi, & scelerum furiis agitatæ Orestes
 Excepit incautum patriasque obtruncat ad aras.*

Virg. Æn. lib. 3.

The great concern of *Andromache*, in the Greek poet, is for the life of *Molosses*, a son she had by *Pyrrhus*. But it is more conformable to the general notion we form of that princess, at this great distance of time, to represent her as the disconsolate widow of *Hector*, and to suppose her the mother of *Astyanax*. Considered in this light, no doubt, she moves our compassion much more effectually, than she could be imagined to do in any distress for a son by a second husband.

In order to bring about this beautiful incident, so necessary to heighten in *Andromache* the character of a tender mother, an affectionate wife, and a widow full of veneration for the memory of her deceased husband, the life of *Astyanax* is indeed a little prolonged beyond the term fixed to it by the general consent of the ancient authors. But so long as there is nothing improbable in the supposition, a judicious critick will always be pleased, when he finds a matter of fact (especially so far removed into the dark and fabulous ages) falsified for the embellishment of a whole poem.

P R O

PROLOGUE.

Written by Mr. STEEL.

*S*INCE fancy of itself is loose and vain,
The wise by rules that airy pow'r restrain:
They think those writers mad, who at their ease
Convey this house and audience where they please;
Who nature's stated distances confound.
And make this spot all soils the sun goes round:
'Tis nothing, when a fancy'd scene's in view,
To skip from Covent-Garden to Peru.

But Shakespear's self transgress'd; and shall each of us
Each pigmy genius, quote great Shakespear's self!
What critic dares prescribe what's just and fit,
Or mark out limits for such boundless wit!
Shakespear could travel thro' earth, sea and air,
And paint out all the pow'r's and wonders there.
In barren desarts he makes, nature smile,
And gives us feasts in his enchanted isle.

Our author does his feeble force confess,
Nor dares pretend such merit to transgress;
Does not such shining gifts of genius share,
And therefore makes propriety his care,
Your treat with study'd decency he serves;
Not only rules of time, and place preserves,
But strives to keep his characters intire,
With French correctness and with British fire.

This piece presented in a foreign tongue,
When France was glorious, and her monarch young.
A hundred times a crowded audience drew;
A hundred times repeated, still 'twas new,

Pyrrhus.

P R O L O G U E.

*Pyrrhus provok'd to no wild rants betray'd,
 Resents his gen'rous love so ill repay'd;
 Does like a man resent, a prince upbraid.
 His sentiments disclose a royal mind,
 Nor is he known a King from guards behind.*

*Injur'd Hermione demands relief;
 But not from heavy narratives of grief:
 In conscious majesty her pride is shewn;
 Born to avenge her wrongs, but not bemoan.*

*Andromache—If in our author's lines,
 As in the great original, she shines,
 Nothing but from barbarity she fears,
 Attend with silence; you'll applaud with tears.*

EPI.

EPILOGUE.

I Hope you'll own, that with becoming art
I've play'd my game, and topp'd the widow's part.
My spouse, poor man ! could not live out the play,
But dy'd commodiously on wedding-day :
While I, his reliſt, made at one bold ſting,
Myſelf a princeſs, and young Sty a king.

You, Ladies, who protract a lover's pain,
And bear your ſervants ſigh whole years in vain
Which of you all would not on marriage venture,
Might ſhe ſo ſoon upon her jointure enter ?

'Twas a ſtrange eſcape ! had Pyrrhus liv'd till now
I had been finely hamper'd in my vow.
To die by one's own hand, and fly the charms
Of love and life in a young monarch's arms !
'Twere an hard fate — e'er I had undergone it.
I might have took one night — to think upon it.

But why, you'll ſay, was all this grief expreſt
For a fiſt huſband, laid long ſince at reſt ?
Why ſo much coldneſs to my kind protector ?
—— Ab ladies ! had you known the good man Hector ?
Homer will tell you (or I'm miſ-inform'd)
That, when enrag'd, the Grecian camp he ſtorm'd,
To break the ten-fold barriers of the gate,
He threw a ſtone of ſuch prodigious weight,
As no two men could liſt ; not ev'n of thoſe
Who in that age of thund'ring mortals roſe :
—— It would have ſprain'd a dozen modern beaux. }

At length howe'er I laid my weeds aſide,
And ſunk the widow in the well-dreſs'd bride.
In you it ſtill remains to grace the play,
And bleſs with joy my coronation day.
Take then, ye circles of the brave and fair,
The fatherleſs and widow to your care.

Dra.

Dramatis Personæ.

M E N

PYRRHUS, *the Son of Achilles, and King of Epirus, in love with Andromache, but betrayed to Hermione.*

Phœnix, *Counsellor to Pyrrhus.*

Orestes, *the Son of Agamemnon, Ambassador from the Greeks to Pyrrhus, in love with Hermione.*

Pylades, *Friend to Orestes, separated from him in a Storm, driven on the Coasts of Epirus, and detained by contrary Winds in the Court of Pyrrhus.*

W O M E N.

Andromache, *Hector's Widow, Captive to Pyrrhus, and Mother to Astyanax.*

Cephalis, *Confidant to Andromache.*

Hermione, *Daughter to Menelaus and Helen, betrothed to Pyrrhus.*

Cleone, *Confidant to Hermione.*

Attendants to PYRRHUS and ORESTES, &c.

The SCENE a great Hall in the Court of PYRRHUS at BUTHROTOS, the Capital City of EPIRUS.

T H E



THE
DISTREST MOTHER.

ACT I. SCENE I.

Enter Orestes and Pylades.

O R E S T E S.

O *Pylades*? What's life without a friend?
At sight of thee my gloomy soul clears up;
My hopes revive, and gladness dawns within me,
After an absence of six tedious moons
How could I hope to find my *Pylades*,
My joy! my comfort! on this fatal shore?
Even in the court of *Pyrrhus*? in these realms,
These hated realms, so cross to all my wishes.
Oh, my brave friend! may no blind stroke of fate
Divide us more, and tear me from myself.

Pyl. O prince! O my *Orestes*! O my friend!——
Thus let me speak the welcome of my heart.

[*Embracing.*

Since I have gain'd this unexpected meeting,
Blest by the powers, who barr'd my way to *Greece*,
And kept me here! e'er since th' unhappy day,
When warring winds (*Epirus* full in view)
Sunder'd our barks on the loud, stormy main.

Orest. It was indeed, a morning full of horror!

Pyl. A thousand boding cares have rack'd my soul
In your behalf. Often, with tears, I mourn'd

THE

The fatal ills, in which your life's involv'd ;
 And grudg'd you dangers, which I could not share,
 I fear'd, to what extreams the black despair
 That prey'd upon your mind might have betray'd you ;
 And lest the gods, in pity to your woes,
 Should hear your pray'rs, and take the life you loath'd.
 But now with joy I see you !—The retinue,
 And numerous followers, that surround you here,
 Speak better fortunes, and a mind dispos'd
 To relish life.

Orest. Alas ! my friend, who knows
 The destiny to which I stand reserv'd !
 I come in search of an inhuman fair ;
 And live or die, as she decrees my fate.

Pyl. You much surprize me, prince ! ——— I
 thought you cur'd

Of your unpity'd, unsuccessful passion.
 Why in *Epirus*, shou'd you hope to find
Hermione less cruel, than at *Sparta* ?
 I thought her pride, and the disdainful manner
 In which she treated all your constant sufferings,
 Had broke your fetters, and assur'd your freedom :
 Asham'd of your repulse, and slighted vows,
 You hated her ; you talk'd of her no more.
 Prince, you deceiv'd me.

Orest. I deceiv'd myself.
 Do not upbraid th' unhappy man, that loves thee.
 Thou know'st, I never hid my passion from thee :
 Thou saw'st it in its birth, and in its progress ;
 And when at last the hoary king, her father,
 Great *Menelaus*, gave away his daughter,
 His lovely daughter, to this happy *Pyrrhus*,
 Th' avenger of his wrongs ; thou saw'st my grief,
 My torture, my despair ; and how I dragg'd,
 From sea to sea, a heavy chain of woes.

O *Pylades* ! my heart has bled within me,
 To see thee, prest with sorrows not thy own,
 Still wand'ring with me, like a banish'd man ;
 Watchful, and anxious for thy wretched friend,
 To temper the wild transports of my mind,
 And save me from myself.

Pyl.

Pyl. Why thus unkind?
 Why will you envy me the pleasing tasks
 Of generous love and sympathizing friendship?
Orest. Thou miracle of truth! — but hear me on.
 When, in the midst of my distast'rous fate,
 I thought, how the divine *Hermione*,
 Deaf to my vows, regardless of my 'plaints,
 Gave up herself in all her charms to *Pyrrhus*;
 Thou may'st remember, I habhor'd her name.
 Strove to forget her, and repay her scorn.
 I made my friends, and even myself, believe
 My soul was freed. Alas! I did not see,
 That all the malice of my heart was love,
 Triumphant thus, and yet a captive still,
 In *Greece* I landed; and in *Greece* I found
 Th' assembled princes all alarm'd with fears,
 In which their common safety seem'd concern'd.
 I join'd them; for I hop'd that war and glory
 Might fill my mind, and take up all my thoughts;
 And, that my shatter'd soul, impair'd with grief,
 Once more would reassume its wonted vigour,
 And ev'ry idle passion quit my breast.

Pyl. The thought was worthy *Agamemnon's* son.
Orest. But see the strange perverseness of my stars,
 Which throws me on the rock I strove to shun?
 The jealous chiefs, and all the states of *Greece*,
 With one unlighted voice, complain of *Pyrrhus*;
 That now, forgetful of the promise given,
 And mindless of his god-like father's fate,
Astyanax he nurses in his court;
Astyanax, the young, surviving hope
 Of ruin'd *Troy*; *Astyanax* descended
 From a long race of kings; great *Hector's* son.

Pyl. A name still dreadful in the ears of *Greece*?
 But prince, you'll cease to wonder, why the child
 Lives thus protected in the court of *Pirrhus*,
 When you shall hear, the bright *Andromache*,
 His lovely captive, charms him from his purpose:
 The mother's beauty guards the helpless son.

Orest. Your tale confirms what I have heard, and
 hence

Spring all my hopes. Since my proud rival wooes
 Another partner to his throne and bed,
Hermione may still be mine. Her father,
 The injur'd *Menelaus* thinks already
 His daughter slighted, and the intended nuptials
 Too long delay'd. I heard his loud complaints
 With secret pleasure: and was glad to find
 Th' ungrateful maid neglected in her turn,
 And all my wrongs aveng'd in her disgrace.

Pyl. Oh, may you keep your just resentments warm.

Orest. Resentments! Oh my friend, too soon I found
 They grew not out of hatred! I'm betray'd.
 I practice on myself; and fondly plot
 My own undoing. Goaded on by love,
 I canvass'd all the suffrages of *Greece*,
 And here I come their sworn ambassador,
 To speak their jealousies and claim this boy.

Pyl. *Pyrrhus* will treat your embassy with scorn.
 Full of *Achilles* his redoubted fire,

Pyrrhus is proud, impetuous, headstrong, fierce;
 Made up of passions; will he then be sway'd,
 And give to death the son of her he loves?

Orest. Oh, would he render up *Hermione*,
 And keep *Alyanax*, I should be blest!

He must; he shall; *Hermione* is my life,
 My soul, my rapture!—I'll no longer curb
 The strong desire that hurries me to madness:
 I'll give a loose to love, I'll bear her hence;
 I'll tear her from his arms, I'll—O ye gods!

Give me *Hermione*; or let me die——

But, tell me, *Pylades*, how stand my hopes?
 Is *Pyrrhus* still enamour'd with her charms?
 Or dost thou think, he'll yield me up the prize,
 The dear, dear prize which he has ravish'd from me?

Pyl. I dare not flatter your fond hopes so far.

The king indeed, cold to the *Spartan* prince,
 Turns all his passion to *Andromache*,
 Hector's afflicted widow. But in vain.

With interwoven love and rage he sues
 The charming captive, obstinately cruel.
 Oft he alarms her for her child, confin'd

Apart:

Apart; and, when her tears begin to flow,
As soon he stops them, and recalls his threats.

Hermione a thousand times has seen

His ill-requested vow return to her;

And takes his indignation all for love:

What can be gather'd from a man so various?

He may, in the disorder of his soul,

Wed her he hates; and punish her he loves.

Orest. But, tell me how the wrong'd *Hermione*
Brooks her slow nuptials, and dishonoured charms?

Pyl. *Hermione* would fain be thought to scorn

Her wavering lover, and disdain his falsehood;

But, spite of all her pride, and conscious beauty,

She mourns in secret her neglected charms?

And oft has made me privy to her tears:

Still threatens to be gone; yet still she stays;

And sometimes sighs, and wishes for *Orestes*.

Orest. Ah, were those wishes from her heart, my
friend,

I'd fly in transport——

[*Flourish within*]

Pyl. Hear; —— The king approaches

To give you audience. Speak your embassy

Without reserve; urge the demands of *Greece*;

And, in the name of all her kings, require,

That *Hector's* son be given into your hands.

Pyrrhus, instead of granting what they ask,

To speed his love, and win the *Trojan* dame,

Will make it merit to preserve her son.

But, see; he comes!

Orest. Mean while, my *Pylades*,

Go, and dispose *Hermione* to see

Her lover, who is come thus far to throw

Himself in all his sorrows at her feet.

SCENE II.

Orestes, Pyrrhus and Phœnix.

Orest. Before I speak the message of the *Greeks*,

Permit me, Sir, to glory in the title

Of their ambassador; since I behold

Troy's vanquisher, and great *Achilles'* son.

Nor does the son rise short of such a father;

If *Hector* fell by him, *Troy* fell by you.

B 2

But,

But, what your father never would have done,
 You do : You cherish the remains of *Troy*;
 And, by an ill-tim'd pity, keep alive
 The dying embers of a ten-years war.
 Have you so soon forgot the mighty *Hector* ?
 The *Greeks* remember his high brandish'd sword,
 That fill'd their states with widows and with orphans ;
 For which they call for vengeance on his son.
 Who knows what he may one day prove ? who
 knows,

But he may brave us in our Ports, and fill'd
 With *Hector's* fury, set our fleets on blaze ?
 You may yourself live to repent your mercy.
 Comply then with the *Grecians* just demands :
 Sate their vengeance, and preserve yourself.

Pyr. The *Greeks* are for my safety more concern'd
 Than I desire. I thought your kings where met
 On more important councils. When I heard
 The name of their embassador, I hop'd
 Some glorious enterprize was taking birth.
 Is *Agamemnon's* son dispatch'd for this ?
 And do the *Grecian* chiefs, renown'd in war,
 A race of heroes, join in close debate
 To plot an infant's death ? — what right has *Greece*
 To ask his life ? must I, must I alone,
 Of all her scepter'd warriors, be deny'd
 To treat my captive as I please ? know, prince,
 When *Troy* lay smoking on the ground, and each
 Proud victor shar'd the harvest of the war ;
Andromache and this her son were mine ;
 Were mine by lot ; and who shall wrest them from me ?
Ulysses bore away old *Priam's* queen ;
Cassandra was your own great father's prize :
 Did I concern myself in what they won ?
 Did I send embassies to claim their captives ?

Orest. But, Sir, we fear, for you and for ourselves,
Troy, may again revive, and a new *Hector*
 Rise in *Astyanax*. Then think betimes —

Pyr. Let dastard souls be timorously wise :
 But tell them, *Pyrrhus* knows not how to form
 Far-fancy'd ills, and dangers out of fight.

Orest.

Orest. Sir, call to mind th' unrivall'd strength of *Troy*;
Her walls, her bulwarks, and her gates of brass,
Her kings, her heroes and embattel'd armies!

Pyr. I call them all to mind and see them all
Confus'd in dust; all mixt in one wide ruin:
All but a child, and he in bondage held.
What vengeance can we fear from such a *Troy*?
If they have sworn to extinguish *Hector's* race,
Why was their vow for twelve long months deferr'd?
Why was he not in *Priam's* bosom slain?
He should have fall'n among the slaughter'd heaps,
Whelm'd under *Troy*. His death had then been just,
When age and infancy, alike in vain,
Pleaded their weakness; when the heat of conquest,
And horrors of the fight, rous'd all our rage,
And blindly hurry'd us through scenes of death.
My fury then was without bounds: But now,
My wrath appeas'd, must I be cruel still?
And, deaf to all the tender calls of pity,
Like a cool murderer, bathe my hands in blood?
An infant's blood?—No, prince—go, bid the *Greeks*
Mark out some other victim; my revenge
Has had its fill. What has escap'd from *Troy*
Shall not be sav'd to perish in *Epirus*.

Orest. I need not tell you, Sir, *Astyanax*
Was doom'd to death in *Troy*; nor mention how
The crafty mother sav'd her darling son.
The *Greeks* do now but urge their former sentence:
Nor is't the boy, but *Hector* they pursue;
The father, draws their vengeance on the son:
The father, who so oft in *Grecian* blood
Has drench'd his sword: The father; whom the *Greeks*
May seek even here.—Prevent them, Sir, in time.

Pyr. No! let them come; since I was born to wage
Eternal wars, let them now turn their arms
On him, who conquer'd for them: Let them come,
And in *Epirus* seek another *Troy*.

'Twas thus they recompens'd my god-like fire;
Thus was *Achilles* thank'd: But, prince, remember,
Their black ingratitude then cost them dear.

Orest. Shall *Greece* then find a rebel son in *Pyrrhus*?

Pyr. Have I then conquer'd to depend on *Greece*?

Orest. *Hermione* will sway your soul to peace,
And mediate 'twixt her father and yourself:
Her beauty will enforce my embassy.

Pyr. *Hermione* may have her charms; and I
May love her still, tho' not her father's slave.
I may in time give proofs, that I'm a lover;
But never must forget, that I am a king.
Mean while, Sir, you may see fair *Helen's* daughter:
I know how near in blood you stand ally'd.
That done, you have my answer, prince. The *Greeks*
No doubt expect your quick return.

SCENE III

Pyrrhus, Phœnix.

Phœn. Sir, do you send your rival to the princess?

Pyr. I am told that he has lov'd her long.

Phœn. If so,

Have you not cause to fear the smother'd flame
May kindle at her sight, and blaze anew?
And she be wrought to listen to his passion?

Pyr. Ah, let them, *Phœnix*, let them love their fill,
Let them go hence; let them depart together;
Together let them sail to *Sparta*; all my ports
Are open to them both. From what constraint,
What irksome thought should I be then deliver'd?

Phœn. But, Sir—

Pyr. I shall another time, good *Phœnix*,
Unbosom to thee all my thoughts—for, see,
Andromache appears.

SCENE IV.

Pyrrhus, Andromache, Cephissâ.

Pyr. May I, madam,
Flatter my hopes so far, as to believe
You come to seek me here?

Andr. This way, Sir, leads

To

To those apartments, where you guard my son.
Since you permit me, once a day, to visit
All I have left of *Heſtor*, and of *Troy*,
I go to weep a few ſad moments with him.
I have not yet, to day, embrac'd my child;
I have not held him in my widow'd arms.

Pyr. Ah, madam! ſhould the threats of *Greece* prevail
You'll have occaſion for your tears, indeed!

Andr. Alas! what threats? what can alarm the *Greeks*?
There are no *Trojans* left!

Pyr. Their hate to *Heſtor*
Can never die: The terror of his name
Still ſhakes their ſouls, and makes them dread his ſon.

Andr. A mighty honour for victorious *Greece*
To fear an infant, a poor, friendleſs child!
Who ſmiles in bondage; nor yet knows himſelf
The ſon of *Heſtor*, and the ſlave of *Pyrrhus*.

Pyr. Weak as he is the *Greeks* demand his life.
And ſend no leſs than *Agamemnon's* ſon
To fetch him hence.

Andr. And, Sir, do you comply
With ſuch demands!—this blow is aim'd at me:
How ſhould the child avenge his ſlaughter'd ſire?
But, cruel men! they will not have him live
To chear my heavy heart, and eaſe my bonds.
I promis'd to myſelf in him a ſon;
In him a friend, a huſband and a father;
But I muſt ſuffer ſorrow heap'd on ſorrow;
And ſtill the fatal ſtroke muſt come from you.

Pyr. Dry up thoſe tears, I muſt not ſee you weep:
And know, I have reſected their demands.
The *Greeks* already threaten me with war:
But, ſhould they arm, as once they did for *Helen*,
And hide the *Adriatick* with their fleets;
Should they prepare a ſecond ten years ſiege,
And lay my tow'rs and palaces in duſt;
I am determin'd to defend your ſon;
And rather die myſelf, than give him up.
But madam, in the miſt of all theſe dangers;
Will you reſuſe me a propitious ſmile?
Hated of *Greece*, and preſt on every ſide.

Let me not, madam, while I fight your cause,
Let me not combat with your cruelties ;
And count *Andromache* amongst my foes.

Andr. Consider, Sir, how this will sound in *Greece* ?
How can so great a soul betray such weakness ?
Let not men say so generous a design
Was but a transport of a heart in love.

Pyr. Your charms will justify me to the world.

Andr. How can *Andromache*, a captive queen,
Oerwhelm'd with grief ; a burden to herself,
Harbour a thought of love ? alas ! what charms
Have these unhappy eyes, by you condemn'd
To weep for ever ?—Talk of it no more.
To reverence the misfortune of a foe ;
To succour the distrest ; to give the son
To an afflicted mother ; to repel
Confederate nations, leagu'd against his life,
Unbrib'd by love, untterrify'd by threats ;
To pity, to protect him : These are cares,
These are exploits worthy *Achilles'* son.

Pyr. Will your resentments, then, endure for ever !
Must *Pyrrhus* never be for giv'n ?——'tis true,
My sword has often reek'd in *Pbrygian* blood,
And carry'd havoc through your royal kindred ;
But your, fair princess, amply have aveng'd
Old *Priam's* vanquish'd house ; and all the woes
I brought on them, fall short of what I suffer.
We both have suffer'd in our turns ; and now
Our common foes should teach us to unite.

Andr. Where does the captive not behold a foe ?

Pyr. Forget that term of hatred ; and behold
A friend in *Pyrrhus* ! give me but to hope,
I'll free your son ; I'll be a father to him :
Myself will teach him to avenge the *Trojans*.
I'll go in person to chastise the *Greeks*,
Both for your wrongs and mine. Inspir'd by you,
What would I not atchieve ? Again shall *Troy*
Rise from it's ashes : This right arm shall fix
Her seat of empire ; and your son shall reign.

Andr. Such dreams of greatness suit not my condition :
His hopes of empire perish'd with his father.

No ;

No ; thou imperial city, ancient *Troy*,
 Thou pride of *Asia*, founded by the gods,
 Never, oh never ! must we hope to see
 Those bulwarks rise, which *Hector* could not guard !
 Sir, all I wish for, is some quiet exile ;
 Where far from *Greece* remov'd and far from you
 I may conceal my son, and mourn my husband :
 Your love creates me envy. Oh, return !
 Return to your betroth'd *Hermione*.

Pyr. Why do you mock me thus ? you know I cannot ;

You know my heart is your's ; my soul hangs on you ;
 You take up every wish ; my waking thoughts,
 And nightly dreams are all employ'd on you.
 'Tis true, *Hermione* was sent to share
 My throne and bed ; and would with transport hear
 The vows, which you neglect.

Andr. She has no *Troy*.

No *Hector* to lament ; she has not lost
 A husband by your conquests ; such a husband !
 (Tormenting thought !) whose death alone has made
 Your fire immortal : *Pyrrhus* and *Achilles*
 Are both grown great by my calamities.

Pyr. Madam, 'tis well ! 'tis very well ! I find
 Your will must be obey'd : Imperious captive,
 It shall : Henceforth I blot you from my mind.
 You teach me to forget your charms ; to hate you :
 For, know, inhuman beauty, I have lov'd
 Too well to treat you with indifference.
 Think well upon it : My disorder'd soul
 Wavers between the extremes of love and rage.
 I've been too tame ! I will awake to vengeance !
 The son shall answer for the mother's scorn.
 The *Greeks* demand him ; nor will I endanger
 My realms, to pleasure an ungrateful woman.

Andr. Then he must die ! alas, my son must die !
 He has no friend, no succour left beside
 His mother's tears, and his own innocence.

Pyr. Go madam ; visit this unhappy son :
 The sight of him may bend your stubborn heart ;
 And turn to softness your unjust disdain.

I shall

I shall once more expect your answer. Go ;
And think, while you embrace the captive boy,
Think, that his life depends on your resolves.

SCENE V.

Andromache, Cephisa.

Andr. I'll go ; and, in the anguish of my heart,
Weep o'er my child—— If he must die, my life
Is wrapt in his ; I shall not long survive.
'Tis for his sake that I have suffer'd life ;
Groan'd in captivity ; and out-liv'd *Hector* :
Yes, my *Astyanax*, we'll go together ;
Together to the realms of night we'll go !
There to thy ravish'd eyes, thy fire I'll shew,
And point him out among the shades below.



ACT II. SCENE I.

Hermione, Cleone.

HERMIONE.

WELL, I'll be rul'd, *Cleone* : I will see him ;
I have told *Pylades*, that he may bring him.
But trust me, were I left to my own thoughts,
I should forbid him yet.

Cle. And why forbid him ?
Is he not, Madam, still the same *Orestes* ?
Orestes, Whose return you oft have wish'd ?
The man, whose sufferings you so oft lamented,
And often prais'd his constancy and love ?

Her. That love, that constancy, so ill requited,
Upbraids me to myself : I blush to think
How I have us'd him ; and would shun his presence.

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What will be my confusion, when he sees me
Neglected and forsaken, like himself?
Will he not say, is this the scornful maid;
The proud *Hermione*, that tyranniz'd
In *Sparta's* court, and triumph'd in her charms?
Her insolence at last is well repaid.
I cannot bear the thought.

Cle. You wrong yourself
With unbecoming fears. He knows too well
Your beauty and your worth. Your lover comes not
To offer insults; but repeat his vows,
And breathe his ardent passion at your feet.
But, Madam, what's your royal father's will?
What orders do your letters bring from *Sparta*?

Her. His orders are, if *Pyrrhus* still delay
The nuptials, and refuse to sacrifice
This *Trojan* boy, I should with speed embark,
And with their embassy return to *Greece*.

Cle. What would you more? *Orestes* comes in time
To save your honour. *Pyrrhus* cools apace,
Prevent his falsehood; and forsake him first.
I know you hate him; you have told me so.

Her. Hate him? my injur'd honour bids me hate him:
Th' ungrateful man! to whom I fondly gave
My virgin heart; the man I lov'd so dearly;
The man I doated on! Oh, my *Cleone*!
How is it possible I should not hate him?

Cle. Then give him over, Madam. Quit his court;
And with *Orestes* —

Her. No! I must have time
To work up all my rage! to meditate
A parting full of horror! My revenge
Will be but too much quicken'd by the traitor.

Cle. Do you then wait new insults? new affronts?
To draw you from your father! then to leave you!
In his own court to leave you! — for a captive.
If *Pyrrhus* can provoke you, he has done it.

Her. Why dost thou heighen my distress? I fear
To search out my own thoughts, and sound my heart.
Be blind to what thou seest; believe me cur'd;
Flatter my weakness; tell me I have conquer'd;

Think

What

Think, that my injur'd soul is set against him ;
And do thy best to make me think so too.

Cle. Why would you loiter here then ?

Her. Let us fly !

Let us begone ! I leave him to his captive :
Let him go kneel and supplicate his slave :
Let us begone ! — But, what if he repent ?
What if the perjurd prince again submit,
And sue for pardon ? what, if he renew
His former vows ? — but, oh, the faithless man !
He slights me drives me to excreams ! However,
I'll stay, *Cleone*, to perplex their loves :
I'll stay 'till by an open breach of contract,
I make him hateful to the *Greeks*. Already
Their vengeance have I drawn upon the son :
Their second embassy shall claim the mother :
I will redouble all my griefs upon her !

Cle. Ah, Madam, whither does your rage transport
you ?

Andromache, alas, is innocent !

A woman plung'd in sorrow ; dead to love :
And when she thinks of *Pyrrbus*, 'tis with horror.

Her. Would I had done so too ! — He had not, then
Betray'd my easy faith — But I alas !
Discover'd all the fondness of my soul ;
I made no secret of my passion to him :
Nor thought it dangerous to be sincere.

My eyes, my tongue, my actions spoke my heart.

Cle. Well might you speak, without reserve to one
Engag'd to you by solemn oaths and treaties.

Her. His ardour too was an excuse to mine :
With other eyes, he saw me then ! — *Cleone*,
Thou may'st remember, every thing conspir'd
To favour him : My father's wrongs ;
The *Greeks* triumphant ; fleets of *Trojan* spoils ;
His mighty fire's, his own immortal fame ;
His eager love ; — all, all conspir'd against me ;
— But I have done : — I'll think no more of *Pyrrbus*.

Orestes wants not merit : And he loves me,
My gratitude, my honour both plead for him :
And if I've power o'er my own heart, 'tis his.

Cle.

Cle. Madam, he comes——

Her. Alas! I did not think

He was so near!——I wish I might not see him!

SCENE II.

Hermione, Cleone, Orestes.

Her. How am I to interpret, Sir, this visit?
Is it a compliment of form, or love?

Orest. Madam, you know my weakness. 'Tis my fate
To love, unpity'd: To desire to see you;
And still to swear each time shall be the last.
My passion breaks through my repeated oaths;
And every time I visit you, I'm perjur'd.
Even now, I find my wounds all bleed afresh:
I blush to own it; but I know no cure.
'I call the gods to witness, I have try'd
Whatever man could do (but try'd in vain)
To wear you from my mind. Through stormy seas,
And savage climes, in a whole year of absence,
I courted dangers, and I long'd for death.

Her. why will you, prince, indulge this mournful
tale?

It ill becomes the ambassador of Greece
To talk of dying and of love. Remember
The Kings you represent: Shall their revenge
Be disappointed by your ill tim'd passion?
Discharge your embassy: 'Tis not *Orestes*
The *Greeks* desire should die.

Orest. My embassy
Is at an end: For *Pyrrhus* has refus'd
To give up *Hector's* son. Some hidden pow'r
Protects the boy.

Her. Faithless, ungrateful man!

Orest. I now prepare for Greece. But, e'er I go,
Would hear my final doom pronounc'd by you.
What do I say?——I do already hear it!
My doom is fixt: I read it in your eyes.

[*Aside*]

Her.

C

Her. Will you then still despair? be still suspicious?
 What have I done? wherein have I been cruel?
 'Tis true, you find me in the court of *Pyrrhus*;
 But 'twas my royal father sent me hither,
 And who can tell, but I have shar'd your griefs?
 Have I ne'er wept in secret? never wish'd
 To see *Orestes*! ———

Orest. Wish'd to see *Orestes*! ———
 Oh joy, Oh extasy! My soul's entranc'd!
 Oh charming princess! Oh transcendent maid!
 My utmost wish! ——— Thus, thus let me express
 My boundless thanks! ——— I never was unhappy ———
 Am I *Orestes*? ———

Her. You are *Orestes*!
 The same unalter'd, generous, faithful lover;
 The prince, whom I esteem; whom I lament;
 And whom I fain would teach my heart to love!

Orest. Ay, there it is! ——— I have but your esteem,
 While *Pyrrhus* has your heart!

Her. Believe me, prince,
 Were you as *Pyrrhus*, I should hate you!

Orest. No!
 I should be blest! I should be lov'd as he is! ———
 Yet all this while I die by your disdain,
 While he neglects your charms, and courts another.

Her. And who has told you, prince, that I'm neglected?

Has *Pyrrhus* said—(Oh, I shall grow distracted!)
 Has *Pyrrhus* told you so! ——— or is it you,
 Who think thus meanly of me? ——— Sir, perhaps,
 All do not judge like you. ———

Orest. Madam, go on!
 Insult me still: I'm us'd to bear your scorn.

Her. Why am I told how *Pyrrhus* loves or hates?
 ——— Go, prince; and arm the *Greeks* against the rebel:
 Let them lay waste his country; raze his towns;
 Destroy his fleets; his palaces; — himself! ———
 Go, prince; and tell me then how much I love him.

Orest. To hasten his destruction, come yourself;
 And work your royal father to his ruin.

Her.

Her. Mean while he weds *Andromache* !

Orest. Ah, princess !

What is't I hear ?

Her. What infamy for *Greece*,

If she shou'd wed a *Phrygian*, and a captive !

Orest. Is this your hatred, Madam ?——'Tis in vain
To hide your passion ; every thing betrays it :
Your looks, your speech, your anger, nay your silence.
Your love appears in all ; your secret flame
Breaks out the more, the more you would conceal it.

Her. Your jealousy perverts my meaning still,
And wrests each circumstance to your disquiet :
My very hate is construed into fondness.

Orest. Impute my fears, if groundless, to my love:

Her. Then hear me, prince. Obedience to a father
First brought me hither ; and the same obedience
Detains me here, 'till *Pyrrhus* drive me hence ;
Or my offended father shall recal me.
Tell this proud king, that *Menelaus* scorns
To match his daughter with a foe of *Greece* :
Bid him resign *Alyanax*, or me.
If he persists to guard the hostile boy,
Hermione embarks with you for *Sparta*.

SCENE III.

Orestes, alone.

Then is *Orestes* blest ! my griefs are fled !
Fled like a dream !—Methinks I tread in air !
Pyrrhus enamour'd of his captive queen,
Will thank me if I take her rival hence :
He looks not on the princess with my eyes !
Surprizing happiness !—unlook'd for joy !
Never let love despair ! The prize is mine !
Be smooth, ye seas ; and, ye propitious winds,
Breathe from *Epirus* to the *Spartan* coasts !
I long to view the sails unfurl'd—But, see !
Pyrrhus approaches in a happy hour.

C 2

SCENE

Her.

SCENE IV.

Orestes, Pyrrhus, Phœnix.

Pyr. I was in pain to find you, prince. My warm,
 Ungovern'd temper would not let me weigh
 Th' importance of your embassy, and hear
 You argue for my good—I was to blame.
 I since have pois'd your reasons; and I thank
 My good allies: Their care deserves my thanks.
 You have convinc'd me, that the weal of *Greece*,
 My father's honour, and my own repose
 Demand, that *Hector's* race should be destroy'd.
 I shall deliver up *Astyanax*;
 And you, yourself, shall bear the victim hence.

Orest. If you approve it, Sir, and are content
 To spill the blood of a defenceless child,
 Th' offended *Greeks*, no doubt, will be pleas'd.

Pyr. Closer to strain the knot of our alliance,
 I have determin'd to espouse *Hermione*.
 You come in time to grace our nuptial rites:
 In you the kings of *Greece* will all be present;
 And you have right to personate her father,
 As his ambassador and brother's son.
 Go, prince, renew your visit; tell *Hermione*,
 To-morrow I receive her from your hands.

Orest. O change of fortune! Oh undone *Orestes*!
 [Aside]

SCENE V.

Pyrrhus, Phœnix.

Pyr. Well, Phœnix, am I still a slave to love?
 What think'st thou now? am I myself again?

Phœn. 'Tis as it should be; this discovers *Pyrrhus*;
 Shews all the hero: Now you are yourself!
 'The son! the rival of the great *Achilles*!

Greece

Greece will applaud you, and the world confess,
Pyrrhus has conquer'd *Troy* a second time!

Pyr. Nay, *Phœnix*, now I but begin to triumph:
I never was a conqueror till now!
Believe me, a whole host, a war of foes
May sooner be subdued, than love. O *Phœnix*!
What ruin have I shun'd? the *Greeks*, enrag'd,
Hung o'er me, like a gathering storm; and soon
Had burst in thunder on my head; while I
Abandon'd duty, empire, honour, all,
To please a thankless woman!——one kind look
Had quite undone me!

Phœn. O, my royal master!
The gods, in favour to you, made her cruel.

Pyr. Thou saw'st with how much scorn she treated
me!

When I permitted her to see her son,
I hop'd it might have work'd her to my wishes.
I went to see the mournful interview,
And found her bath'd in tears; and lost in passion.
Wild with distress, a thousand times she call'd
On *Hector's* name; and when I spoke in comfort,
And promis'd my protection to her son,
She kiss'd the boy, and call'd again on *Hector*:
Then strain'd him in her arms; and cry'd, 'tis he!
'Tis he himself! his eyes, his every feature!
His very frown, and his stern look already!
'Tis he! 'tis my lov'd lord, whom I embrace!——
Does she then think, that I preserve the boy
To sooth and keep alive her flame for *Hector*?

Phœn. No doubt, she does; and thinks you favour'd
in it.

But let her go for an ungrateful woman!

Pyr. I know the thoughts of her proud, stubborn
heart:

Vain of her charms, and insolent in beauty,
She mocks my rage; and, when it threatens loudest,
Expects 'twill soon be humbled into love.
But we shall change our parts; and she shall find,
I can be deaf, like her, and steel my heart!

She's *Hector's* widow, I *Achilles'* son.

Pyrrhus is born to hate *Andromache*.

Phæn. My royal master, talk of her no more:
I do not like this anger. Your *Hermione*
Should now engross your thoughts. 'Tis time to see her.
'Tis time you should prepare the nuptial rites;
And not rely upon a rival's care:
It may be dangerous.

Pyr. But tell me, *Phænix*;
Dost thou not think the proud *Andromache*
Will be enrag'd when I shall wed the princess?

Phæn. Why does *Andromache* still haunt your
thoughts?

What is it to you, be she enrag'd or pleas'd?
Let her name perish: Think of her no more!

Pyr. No, *Phænix*!—I have been too gentle with her:
I've check'd my wrath, and stifled my resentments:
She knows not yet to what degree I hate her,
Let us return:——I'll brave her to her face:
I'll give my anger its free course against her.
Thou shalt see, *Phænix*, how I'll break her pride!

Phæn. Oh, go not, Sir!—There's ruin in her eyes!
You do not know your strength: You'll fall before her,
Adore her beauty, and revive her scorn.

Pyr. That were indeed a most unmanly weakness!
Thou dost not know me, *Phænix*!

Phæn. Ay, my prince!
You still are struggling in the toils of love.

Pyr. Can'st thou then think I love this woman still?
One who repays my passion with disdain!
A stranger, captive, friendless and forlorn;
She and her darling son within my power;
His life a forfeit to the *Greeks*: Yet I
Preserve her son; would take her to my throne;
Would fight her battles, and avenge her wrongs;
And all this while she treats me as her foe!

Phæn. You have it in your pow'r to be reveng'd.

Pyr. Yes;——and I'll shew my power!——I'll
give her cause

To have me! her *Asiyanax* shall die——
What tears will then be shed! How will she then

THE DISTREST MOTHER.

31

In bitterness of heart reproach my name!

'Then to compleat her woes, will I espouse

Hermione:——'twill stab her to the heart!

Phæn. Alas, you threaten like a lover still!

Pyr. *Phænix*, excuse this trouble of my soul:

'Tis the last effort of expiring love.

Phæn. Then hasten, Sir, to see the *Spartan* princess:
And turn the bent of your desires on her.

Pyr. Oh, 'tis a heavy task to conquer love!

And wain the soul from her accusom'd fondness,

But, come:——A long-farewel to *Hector's* widow.

'Tis with a secret pleasure I look back,

And see the many dangers I have pass'd.

The merchant thus, in dreadful tempests tost,

Thrown by the waves on some unlook'd-for coast;

Oft turns, and sees, with a delighted eye,

'Midst rocks and shelves the broken billows fly:

And, while the outrageous winds the deep deform,

Smiles on the tumult, and enjoys the storm.



ACT III. SCENE I.

Pylades, Orestes.

PYLADES.

FOR heav'n's sake, Sir, compose your ruffled mind:
And moderate your rage!

Orest. No, *Pylades*!

This is no-time to counsel——I am deaf.

Talk not of reason! I have been too patient.

Life is not worth my care. My soul grows desperate.

I'll bear her off; or perish in th' attempt.

I'll force her from his arms:——by heav'n, I will!

Pyl. Well, 'tis agreed, my friend:—we'll force her
hence.

But still consider we are in *Epirus*:

The

The court, the guards, *Hermione* herself,
The very air we breathe, belongs to *Pyrrhus*.
Good gods! what tempted you to seek her here?

Orest. Lost to myself, I knew not what I did!
My purposes were wild. Perhaps I came
To menace *Pyrrhus*, and upbraid this woman.

Pyl. This violence of temper may prove fatal.

Orest. I must be more than man to bear these shocks,
These outrages of fate with temper!

He tells me that he weds *Hermione*;
And will to-morrow take her from my hand! ———
My hand shall sooner tear the tyrant's heart! ———

Pyl. Your passion blinds you, Sir:—he's not to blame,
Could you but look into the soul of *Pyrrhus*,
Perhaps you'd find it tortur'd like your own.

Orest. No, *Pylades*! 'tis all design. ——— His pride,
To triumph over me, has chang'd his love.
The fair, the bright *Hermione*, before I came,
In all her bloom of beauty, was neglected.
Ah cruel gods! I thought her all my own!
She was consenting to return to *Sparta*:
Her heart, divided betwixt rage and love,
Was on the wing to take its leave of *Pyrrhus*.
She heard my sighs; she pity'd my complaints;
She prais'd my constancy: ——— The least indifference
From this proud king had made *Orestes* happy!

Pyl. So your fond heart believes!

Orest. Did I not see
Her hate, her rage, her indignation rise
Against the ungrateful man?

Pyl. Believe me, prince.

'Twas then she lov'd him most! had *Pyrrhus* left her,
She would have form'd some new pretext to stay.
Take my advice; ——— think not to force her hence;
But fly yourself from her destructive charms.
Her soul is link'd to *Pyrrhus*; were she your's,
She would reproach you still, and still regret
Her disappointed nuptials. ———

Orest. Talk no more!

I cannot bear the thoughts! she must be mine!
Did *Pyrrhus* carry thunder in his hand,
I'd stand the bolt, and challenge all his fury,

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E'er I resign'd *Hermione*——by force
I'll snatch her hence, and bear her to my ships!
Have we forgot her mother *Helen's* rape?

Pyl. Will then *Orestes* turn a ravisher!
And blot his embassy?

Orest. O, *Pylades*!

My grief weighs heavy on me:—'Twill distract me.
O leave me to myself!—let not thy friendship
Involve thee in my woes; too long already,
Too long hast thou been punish'd for my crimes,
It is enough, my friend!——it is enough!
Let not thy generous love betray thee farther.
The gods have set me as their mark, to empty
Their quivers on me.——Leave me to myself:
Mine be the danger; mine the enterprize.
All I request of thee is, to return,
And in my place convey *Astyanax*
(As *Pyrrhus* has consented) into *Greece*.
Go, *Pylades*.——

Pyl. Lead on, my friend, lead on!

Let us bear off *Hermione*! no toil,
No danger can deter a friend!——lead on!
Draw up the *Greeks*; summon your numerous train;
The ships are ready; and the wind fits fair:
There eastward lies the sea, the rolling waves
Break on these palace-stairs. I know each pass,
Each avenue and out-let of the court.
This very night we'll carry her on board.

Orest. Thou art too good!—I trespass on thy friendship:

But, oh excuse a wretch whom no man pities,
Except thyself; one just about to lose
The treasure of his soul; whom all mankind
Conspire to hate, and one who hates himself.
When will my friendship be of use to thee?

Pyl. The question is unkind—But now remember—
To keep your counsels close, and hide your thoughts;
Let not *Hermione* suspect—no more—
I see her coming, Sir.——

Orest. Away, my friend;
I am advised; my all depends upon it.

SCENE

SCENE II.

Orestes, Hermione, Cleone.

Orest. Madam, your orders are obey'd: I have seen
Pyrrhus, my rival; and have gain'd him for you.
 The king resolves to wed you.

Her. So I'm told;

And farther, I am inform'd, that you, *Orestes*
 Are to dispose me for the intended marriage.

Orest. And are you, madam, willing to comply?

Her. Could I imagine *Pyrrhus* lov'd me still?
 After so long delays, who would have thought
 His hidden flames would shew themselves at last,
 And kindle in his breast, when mine expir'd?
 I can suppose, with you, he fears the *Greeks*;
 That it is his interest, and not love, directs him;
 And, that my eyes had greater power o'er you.

Orest. No princess, no!—It is too plain he loves you.
 Your eyes do what they will; and cannot fail
 To gain a conquest where you wish they should.

Her. What can I do, alas!—my faith is promised;
 Can I refuse what is not mine to give?
 A princess is not at her choice to love;
 All we have left us is a blind obedience;
 And yet, you see, how far I had comply'd,
 And made my duty yield to your intreaties.

Orest. Ah, cruel maid! you knew—But I have done.
 All have a right to please themselves in love:
 I blame you not: 'Tis true, I hop'd; But you
 Are mistress of your heart; and I'm content.
 'Tis fortune is mine enemy, not you;
 But, madam, I shall spare your farther pain
 On this uneasy theme; and take my leave.

SCENE III.

Hermione, Cleone.

Her. *Cleone*, Could'st thou think he'd be so calm?

Cle. Madam, this silent grief sits heavy on him.

He's

He's to be pity'd ; his too eager love
Has made him busy to his own destruction.

His threats have wrought this change of mind in *Pyrr-*

Her. Dost thou think *Pyrrhus* capable of fear ? (*Pyrrhus*.)
Whom should th' intrepid *Pyrrhus* fear ? the *Greeks* ?

Did he not lead their harrass'd troops to conquest
When they despair'd ? when they retir'd from *Troy*,
And sought for shelter in their burning fleets ?

Did he not then supply his father's place ?

No ! my *Cleone* ; he's above constraint :

He acts unforc'd ; and where he weds, he loves.

Cle. Oh, that *Orestes* had remain'd in *Greece* !

I fear to-morrow will prove fatal to him.

Her. Wilt thou discourse of nothing but *Orestes* ?

Pyrrhus is mine again ! ——— Is mine for ever !

Oh, my *Cleone* ! I am wild with joy ———

Pyrrhus, the bold ! the brave ! the god-like *Pyrrhus* ?

——— Oh, I could tell thee numberless exploits

And tire thee with his battles ! — Oh, *Cleone* ———

Cle. Madam, conceal your joy — I see *Andromache* :

She weeps, and comes to speak her sorrows to you.

Her. I will indulge the gladness of my heart !

Let us retire : Her grief is out of season.

SCENE IV.

Andromache, Hermione, Cleone, Cephisa.

Andr. Ah, madam ! whither, whither do you fly ?

Where can your eyes behold a sight more pleasing
Than *Hector's* widow suppliant, and in tears ?

I come not an alarm, a jealous foe,

To envy you the heart your charms have won :

The only man I fought to please is gone ;

Kill'd in my fight by an inhuman hand.

Hector first taught me love ; which my fond heart

Shall ever cherish, 'till we meet in death.

But, Oh, I have a son ! ——— and you, one day,

Will be no stranger to a mother's fondness :

But heav'n forbid, that you should ever know

A mother's sorrow for an only son,

Her joy, her bliss, her last surviving comfort !

When

When every hour she trembles for his life!
 Your power o'er *Pyrrhus* may relieve my fears.
 Alas! what danger is there in a child,
 Sav'd from the wreck of a whole ruin'd empire?
 Let me go hide him in some desert isle:
 You may rely upon my tender care,
 To keep him far from perils of ambition:
 All he can learn of me, will be to weep!

Her. Madam, 'tis easy to conceive your grief:
 But, it would ill become me, to solicit
 In contradiction to my father's will:
 'Tis he, who urges to destroy your son.
 Madam, if *Pyrrhus* must be brought to pity,
 No woman does it better than yourself:
 If you gain him, I shall comply of course.

SCENE V.

Andromache, Cephisa.

Andr. Didst thou not mind with what disdain she
 spoke!

Youth and prosperity have made her vain:
 She has not seen the sickle turns of life.

Ceph. Madam, were I as you, I'd take her counsel;
 I'd speak my own distress: One look from you
 Will vanquish *Pyrrhus* and confound the *Greeks*——
 See, where he comes!——lay hold on this occasion.

SCENE VI.

Pyrrhus, Andromache, Phænix, Cephisa.

Pyr. Where is the princess?—did you not inform me
Hermione was here? [To *Phænix*.

Phæn. I thought so, Sir.

Andr. Thou seest, what mighty power my eyes have
 on him! [To *Cephisa*,

Pyr. What says she *Phænix*!

Andr. I have no hope left!

Phæn. Let us be gone:—*Hermione* expects you.

Ceph. For heaven's sake, madam, break this sullen
 silence.

Andr.

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Andr. My child's already promised! —————

Ceph. But not given.

Andr. No! no! —my tears are vain! his doom is fix'd!

Pyr. See, if she deigns to cast one look upon us!
Proud woman!

Andr. I provok'd him by my presence.

Let us retire.

Pyr. Come, let us satisfy

The *Greeks*; and give them up this *Phrygian* boy.

Andr. Ah, Sir, recal those words! —what have you said?

If you give up my son, O give up me! —————

You, who so many times have sworn me friendship;

Oh heav'ns! —will you not look with pity on me?

Is there no hope? Is there no room for pardon?

Pyr. *Phœnix* will answer you: —my word is past.

Andr. You, who would brave so many dangers for me.

Pyr. I was your lover then: —I now am free:

To favour you I might have spar'd his life:

But you would ne'er vouchsafe to ask it of me.

Now 'tis too late.

Andr. Ah, Sir, you understood

My tears, my wishes, which I durst not utter,

Afraid of a repulse. Oh, Sir, excuse

The pride of royal blood that checks my soul,

And knows not how to be importunate.

You know, alas! I was not born to kneel,

To sue for pity and to own a master.

Pyr. No! in your heart you curse me! you disdain

My generous flame, and scorn to be obliged!

This very son, this darling of your soul,

Would be less dear, did I preserve him for you.

Your anger, your aversion fall on me?

You hate me more than the whole league of *Greeks*:

But, I shall leave you to your great resentments.

Let us go, *Phœnix*, and appease the *Greeks*.

Andr. Then let me die! and let me go to *Hector*!

Ceph. But, madam —————

Andr. What can I do more? the tyrant

Sees my distraction, and insults my tears! [*To Cephisa*:

—————Behold how low you have reduc'd a queen!

D

These

Andr.

These eyes have seen my country laid in ashes;
 My kindred fall in war; my father slain;
 My husband dragg'd in his own blood; my son
 Condemn'd to bondage and myself a slave.
 Yet in the midst of these unheard-of woes,
 'Twas some relief to find myself your captive;
 And that my son, deriv'd from ancient kings,
 Since he must serve, had *Pyrrhus* for his master.
 When *Priam* kneel'd, the great *Achilles* wept:
 I hop'd I should not find his son less noble:
 I thought the brave were still the most compassionate!
 Oh, do not Sir, deuide me from my child!
 If he must die — —

Pyr. Phœnix, withdraw a while.

S C E N E V N.

Pyrrhus, *Andromache*.

Pyr. Rise, madam. — Yet you may preserve your son.
 I find, whenever I provoke your tears,
 I furnish you with arms against myself.
 I thought my hatred fix'd before I saw you.
 Oh, turn your eyes upon me, while I speak!
 And see, if you discover in my looks
 An angry judge, or an obdurate foe.
 Why will you force me to desert your cause?
 In your son's name I beg we may be friends;
 Let me intreat you to secure his life!
 Must I turn suppliant for him? Think, oh think,
 ('Tis the last time) you both may yet be happy?
 I know the ties I break; the foes I arm:
 I wrong *Hermione*: I send her hence;
 And with her diadem I bind your brows.
 Consider well; for, 'tis of moment to you?
 Chuse to be wretched, madam, or a queen,
 My soul, consum'd with a whole year's despair,
 Can bear no longer these perplexing doubts.
 Enough of sighs, and tears, and threats I have try'd:
 I know, if I'm depriv'd of you I die:
 But Oh, I die, if I wait longer for you?
 I leave you to your thoughts: When I return,

We'll

We'll to the temple : There you'll find your son ;
And there be crown'd, or give him up for ever.

S C E N E VIII.

Andromache, Cephisa.

Ceph. I told you, madam, that, in spite of *Greece*
You would o'er-rule the malice of your fortune.

Andr. Alas *Cephisa*, what have I obtain'd ;
Only a poor, short respite for my son.

Ceph. You have enough approv'd your faith to *Hector* ;
To be reluctant still would be a crime.
He would himself persuade you to comply.

Andr. How ; — would'st thou give me *Pyrrhus* for a
husband ?

Ceph. Think you 'twill please the ghost of your dead
husband ;

That you should sacrifice his son ? consider,
Pyrrhus once more invites you to a throne ;
Turns all his power against the foes of *Troy* ;
Remembers not *Achilles* was his father ;
Retracts his conquests, and forgets his hatred.

Andr. But, how can I forget it ! how can I
Forget my *Hector*, treated with dishonour ;
Depriv'd of funeral rites ; and vilely dragg'd
A bloody corpse, about the walls of *Troy* ?
Can I forget the good old king his father,
Slain in my presence ; at the altar slain ?
Which vainly, for protection, he embrac'd ?
Hast thou forgot that dreadful night, *Cephisa*,
When a whole people fell : Methinks I see
Pyrrhus enrag'd, and breathing vengeance, enter
Amidst the glare of burning palaces :
I see him hew his passage through my brothers ;
And, bath'd in blood, lay all my kindred waste.
Think, in this scene of horror, what I suffer'd :
This is the courtship I receiv'd from *Pyrrhus* ;
And this the husband thou would'st give me : No,
We both will perish first : I'll ne'er consent.

Ceph. Since you resolve *Assyanax* shall die,
Haste to the temple ; bid your son farewell.

Why do you tremble, madam ?

Andr. Oh, *Cepbisa* !

Thou hast awaken'd all the mother in me.

How can I bid farewell to the dear child,

The pledge, the image of my much-lov'd lord,

Alas, I call to mind the fatal day,

When his too forward courage led him forth

To seek *Achilles*.

Ceph. Oh, the unhappy hour !

'Twas then *Troy* fell, and all her god's forsook her.

Andr. That morn *Cepbisa* ! that ill fated morn,

My husband bid thee bring *Astyanax* ;

He took him in his arms ; and as I wept,

My wife, my dear *Andromache*, said he,

(Heaving with stifled sighs to see me weep) :

What fortune may attend my arms the gods

Alone can tell. to thee I give the boy ;

Preserve him as the token of our loves :

If I should fall, let him not miss his fire

While thou surviv'st ; but by thy tender care

Let the son see, that thou didst love his father.

Ceph. And will you throw away a life so precious ?
At once extirpate all the *Trojan* line ?

Andr. Inhuman king ! what has he done to suffer ?

If I neglect your vows, is he to blame ?

Has he reproach'd you with his slaughter'd kindred ?

Can he resent those ills he does not know ?

But Oh ! while I deliberate he dies.

No, no, thou must not die while I can save thee :

Oh ! let me find out *Pyrrhus*—Oh *Cepbisa* !

Do thou go find him.

Ceph. What must I say to him ?

Andr. Tell him I love my son to such excess.——

But dost thou think he means the child shall die ?

Can love rejected turn to so much rage ?

Ceph. madam, he'll soon be here———resolve on something.

Andr. Well then, assure him——

Ceph. Madam, of your love ?

Andr. Alas, thou know'st, that is not in my power.

Oh my dead lord ! Oh *Priam's* royal house !

Oh

Oh my *Astyanax*! at what a price
Thy mother buys thee! ——— let us go.

Ceph. But whither?
And what does your unsettled heart resolve?

Andr. Come, my *Cephisa*, let us go together
To the sad monument, which I have rais'd
To *Hector's* shade; where in their sacred urn
The ashes of my hero lie enclosed.

The dear remains which I have sav'd from *Troy*;
There let me weep, there summon to my aid,
With pious rites my *Hector's* awful shade;
Let him be witness to my doubts, my fears,
My agonizing heart, my flowing tears:
Oh! may he rise in pity from his tomb,
And fix his wretched son's uncertain doom.



ACT IV. SCENE I.

Andromache. Cephisa.

Ceph. **B**Left be the tomb of *Hector*, that inspires
These pious thoughts: Or is it *Hector's* self
That prompts you to preserve your son! 'tis he,
Who still presides o'er ruin'd *Troy*; 'tis he,
Who urges *Pyrrhus* to restore *Astyanax*.

Andr. *Pyrrhus* has said he will; and thou hast har-
him

Just now renew the oft-repeated promise.

Ceph. Already, in the transport of his heart,
He gives you up his kingdom, his allies;
And thinks himself o'erpaid for all in you.

Andr. I think I may rely upon his promise:
And yet my heart is overcharg'd with grief.

Ceph. Why should you grieve? you see he bids defiance
To all the *Greeks*; and, to protect your son
Against their rage, has placed his guards about him;
Leaving himself defenceless for his sake:
But madam, think the coronation pomps

Will soon demand your presence in the temple:
'Tis time you lay aside these mourning weeds.

Andr. I will be there; but first would see my son.

Ceph. Madam, you need not now be anxious for him:
He will be always with you, all your own,
To lavish the whole mother's fondness on him:
What a delight to train beneath your eye
A son, who grows no longer up in bondage;
A son, in whom a race of kings revives?
But madam, you are sad, and wrapt in thought,
As if you relish'd not your happiness.

Andr. Oh I must see my son once more, *Cephisa!*

Ceph. Madam, he now will be no more a captive;
Your visits may be as frequent as you please.
To-morrow you may pass the live-long day——

Andr. To-morrow! Oh *Cephisa!* — But, no more!

Cephisa. I have always found thee faithful:
A load of care weighs down my drooping heart.

Ceph. Oh! that 'twere possible for me to ease you.

Andr. I soon shall exercise thy long-try'd faith.——
Mean while I do conjure thee, my *Cephisa*,
Thou take no notice of my present trouble:
And, when I shall disclose my secret purpose,
That thou be punctual to perform my will.

Ceph. Madam, I have no will but yours. My life
Is nothing, ballanc'd with my love to you.

Andr. I thank thee, good *Cephisa*; my *Astyanax*
Will recompense thy friendship to his mother.
But, come, my heart's at ease: assist me now
To change this sable habit——yonder comes
Hermione; I would not meet her rage.

S C E N E II.

Hermione, Cleone.

Cle. This unexpected silence, this reserve,
This outward calm, this settled frame of mind
After such wrongs and insults, much surprize me!
You, who before could not command your rage
When *Pyrrhus* look'd but kindly on his captive;
How can you, bear unmov'd that he should wed her,

Andr.

And seat her on a throne which you should fill ?

I fear this dreadful stillness in your soul !

'Twere better, madam——

Her. Have you call'd *Orestes* ?

Cle. Madam, I have. His love is too impatient,

Not to obey with speed the welcome summons.

His love-sick heart o'erlooks his unkind usage :

His ardour's still the same—Madam, he's here.

S C E N E. III.

Orestes, Hermione, Cleone.

Orest. Ah, madam, is it true ? does then *Orestes*,

At length attend you by your own commands ?

What can I do——

Her. *Orestes*, do you love me ?

Orest. What means that question, princess ? Do I love
you ?

My oaths, my perjuries, my hopes, my fears,

My farewell, my return, all speak my love.

Her. Avenge my wrongs and I'll believe them all.

Orest. It shall be done—my soul has catch'd the
alarm !

We'll spirit up the *Greeks*—I'll lead them on :

Your cause shall animate our fleets and armies.

Let us return : Let us not lose a moment,

But urge the fate of this devoted land :

Let us depart.

Her. No, prince, let us stay here !

I will have vengeance here—I will not carry

This load of infamy to *Greece* ; nor trust

The chance of war to vindicate my wrongs,

Ere I depart I'll make *Epirus* mourn.

If you avenge me, let it be this instant ;

My rage brooks no delay—haste to the temple,

Haste prince, and sacrifice him.

Orest. Whom ?

Her. Why *Pyrrhus*.

Orest. *Pyrrhus* ! did you say *Pyrrhus* ?

Her. You demurr ?

Oh fly, begone ! give me not time to think !

r, And

Talk

Talk not of laws——he tramples on all laws——
Let me not hear him justify'd——away.

Orest. You cannot think I'll justify my rival,
Madam, your love has made him criminal.
You shall have vengeance; I'll have vengeance too;
But let our hatred be profess'd and open;
Let us alarm all *Greece*, denounce a war;
Let us attack him in his strength, and hunt him down
By conquest: Shou'd I turn a base assassin,
'Twould sully all the kings I represent.

Her. Have not I been dishonour'd? set at nought?
Expos'd to scorn?——and will you suffer
The tyrant, who dares use me thus, to live?
Know, prince, I hate him more than once I loved him;
The gods alone can tell how once I loved him;
Yes, the false perjur'd man, I once did love him;
And, spite of all his crimes and broken vows,
If he should live, I may relapse——who knows
But I to morrow may forgive my wrongs?

Orest. First let me tear him piecemeal—he shall die.
But, madam, give me leisure to contrive
The place, the time, the manner of his death:
Yet I'm a stranger in the court of *Pyrrhus*:
Scarce have I set my foot within *Epirus*,
When you enjoin me to destroy the prince.
It shall be done this very night.

Her. But now,
This very hour he weds *Andromache*;
The temple shines with pomp; the golden throne
Is now prepar'd; the joyful rites begin;
My shame is publick——Oh be speedy, prince!
My wrath's impatient——*Pyrrhus* lives too long!
Intent on love, and heedless of his person,
He covers with his guards the *Trojan* boy.
Now is the time; assemble all your *Greeks*:
Mine shall assist them; let their fury loose:
Already they regard him as a foe.
Be gone, *Orestes*——kill the faithless tyrant;
My love shall recompense the glorious deed.

Orest. Consider, madam——

Her. You but mock my rage!

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I was contriving how to make you happy.
Think you to merit by your idle sighs ;
And not attest your love by one brave action ?
Go, with your boasted constancy, and leave
Hermione to execute her own revenge !
I blush to think how my too easy faith
Has twice been baffled in one shameful hour !

Orest. Hear me but speak !—you know I'll die
to serve you ?

Her. I'll go myself: I'll stab him at the altar:
Then drive the poignard, reeking with his blood,
Through my own heart. In death we shall unite:
Better to die with him, than live with you !

Orest. That were to make him blest ; and me more
wretched :

Madam, he dies by me: — — — Have you a foe,
And shall I let him live ? My rival too ?
Ere yon meridian sun declines, he dies.
And you shall say, that I deserve your love.

Her. Go, prince, strike home ! and leave the rest to
me.

Let all your ships stand ready for our flight.

SCENE IV.

Hermione, Cleone,

Cle. madam, you'll perish in this bold attempt.

Her. Give me my vengeance, I'm content to perish.
I was to blame to trust it with another ;
In my own hand it had been more secure.

Orestes hates not *Pyrrhus*: as I hate him ;
I should have thrust the dagger home ; have seen
The tyrant curse me with his parting breath,
And roll about his eyes in vain.

To find *Andromache*, whom I would hide.

Oh, would *Orestes*, when he gives the blow,

Tell him he dies my victim !—haste, *Cleone* ;

Charge him to say, *Hermione's* resentments,

Not

Not those of *Greece*, have sentenc'd him to death:

Haste, my *Cleone*! my revenge is lost

If *Pyrrhus* knows not that he dies by me!

Cle. I shall obey your orders, ——— but I see
The king approach!—who could expect him here!

Her. Oh, *Cleone*! fly, and bid *Orestes*
Not to proceed a step before I see him.

SCENE V.

Hermione, Pyrrhus.

Pyr. Madam, I ought to shun an injur'd princess—

Your distant looks reproach me; and I come

Not to defend, but to avow my guilt.

Pyrrhus will ne'er approve his own injustice,

Nor form excuses, while his heart condemns him.

I might perhaps alledge, our warlike fires,

Unknown to us, engag'd us to each other;

And join'd our hearts by contract, not by love.

But I detest such cobweb arts; I own

My father's treaty, and allow its force.

I sent ambassadors to call you hither;

Receiv'd you as my queen; and hop'd my oaths

So oft renew'd, might ripen into love.

The gods can witness, madam, how I fought

Against *Andromache's* too fatal charms!

And still I wish I had the power to leave

This *Trojan* beauty, and be just to you.

Discharge your anger on this perjur'd man!

For I abhor my crime! and should be pleas'd

To hear you speak your wrongs aloud: No terms,

No bitterness of wrath; nor keen reproach

Will equal half the upbraidings of my heart.

Her. I find, Sir, you can be sincere: You scorn

To act your crimes with fear like other men.

A hero should be bold; above all laws;

Be bravely false; and laugh at solemn ties.

To be perfidious shews a daring mind:

And you have nobly triumph'd o'er a maid!

To

To court me; to reject me; to return;
Then to forsake me for a *Pbrygian* slave;
To lay proud *Troy* in ashes; then to rise
The son of *Hektor*, and renounce the *Greeks*,
Are actions worthy the great soul of *Pyrrhus*.

Pyr. Madam, go on; give your resentments birth;
And pour forth all your indignations on me.

Her. 'Twould please your queen should I upbraid —
your falshood!

Call you perfidious, traitor, all the names
That injur'd virgins lavish on your sex;
I should o'erflow with tears, and die with grief,
And furnish out a tale to sooth her pride.
But, Sir, I would not over-charge her joys.
If you would charm *Andromache*, recount
Your bloody battles, your exploits, your slaughters,
Your great achievements in her father's palace.
She needs must love the man who fought so bravely,
And in her sight slew half her royal kindred.

Pyr. With horror I look back on my past deeds!
I punish'd *Helen's* wrongs too far, I shed
Too much of blood: But, madam, *Helen's* daughter
Should not object those ills the mother caused.
However, I am pleas'd to find you hate me;
I was too forward to accuse myself:
The man who ne'er was lov'd, can ne'er be false.
Obedience to a father brought you hither;
And I stood bound by promise to receive you;
But our desires were different ways inclin'd;
And you, I own, were not oblig'd to love me.

Her. Have I not lov'd you then! perfidious man!
For you I slighted all the *Grecian* princes;
Forsook my father's house; conceal'd my wrongs
When most provok'd; would not return to *Sparta*:
In hopes that time might fix your wavering heart.
I lov'd you when inconstant; and even now,
Inhuman king, that you pronounce my death,
My heart still doubts, if I shou'd love, or hate you.
But, oh since you resolve to wed another,
Defer your cruel purpose till to-morrow!
That I may not be here to grace her triumph:

This

This is the last request I e'er shall make you —
 See if the barbarous prince vouchsafes an answer!
 Go, then, to the lov'd *Phrygian*; hence I be gone!
 And bear to her those vows that once were mine:
 Go in defiance to the avenging gods!
 Be gone! the priest expects you at the altar —
 But, tyrant, have a care I come not thither.

S C E N E VI.

Pyrrhus, Phœnix.

Phœn. Sir, did you mind her threats? your life's in danger:

There is no trifling with a woman's rage.
 The *Greeks*, that swarm about the court, all hate you,
 Will treat you as their country's enemy,
 And join in her revenge: Besides, *Orestes*
 Still loves her to distraction: Sir, I beg —

Pyr. How! *Phœnix*: — Should I fear a woman's threats?

A nobler passion takes up all my thought:
 I must prepare to meet *Andramache*.
 Do thou place all my guards about her son:
 If he be safe, *Pyrrhus* is free from fear.

S C E N E VII.

Phœnix alone.

Oh *Pyrrhus*! Oh, what pity 'tis, the gods,
 Who fill'd thy soul with every kingly virtue,
 Form'd thee for empire and consummate greatness,
 Should leave thee so expos'd to wild desires
 That hurry thee beyond the bounds of reason!
 Such was *Achilles*, generous, fierce, and brave,
 Open, and undesigning, but impatient,
 Undisciplin'd and not to be controll'd.
 I fear this whirl of passion, this career
 That over-bears reflection and cool thought.

The DISTREST MOTHER.

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I tremble for the event! ——— but see, the queen,
Magnificent in royal pride, appears.
I must obey, and guard her son from danger.

S C E N E VIII.

Andromache, Cephisa.

Ceph. Madam, once more you look and move a queen;
Your sorrows are dispersed, your charms revive,
And every faded beauty blooms anew.

Andr. Yet all is not as I could wish, *Cephisa*.

Ceph. You see the king is watchful o'er your son;
Decks him with princely robes, with guards surrounds
him:

Astyanax begins to reign already.

Andr. *Pyrrhus* is nobly minded; and I fain
Would live to thank him for *Astyanax*:
'Tis vain thought ——— however since my child
Has such a friend, I ought not to repine.

Ceph. These dark unfoldings of your soul perplex me:
What meant these floods of tears, those warm embraces,
As if you bid your son adieu for ever?
For heav'n's sake, madam, let me know your griefs!
If you distrust my faith ———

Andr. That were to wrong thee.
Oh, my *Cephisa*! this gay, borrowed air,
This blaze of jewels, and this bridal dress,
Are but mock-trappings to conceal my woe;
My heart still mourns; I still am *Hector*'s widow.

Ceph. Will you then break the promise given to *Pyrr-*
hus,

Blow up his rage afresh, and blast your hope?

Andr. I thought, *Cephisa*, thou hadst known thy
mistress!

Could'st thou believe I would be false to *Hector*?
Fall off from such a husband! break his rest,
And call him to this hated light again,
To see *Andromache*, in *Pyrrhus*' arms!
Would *Hector*, were he living and I dead,

Forget

Forget *Andromache*, and wed her foe?

Ceph. I cannot guess what drift your thoughts pursue:

But, Oh, I fear there's something dreadful in it!

Must then *Astyanax* be doom'd to die;

And you to linger out a life in bondage?

Andr. Nor this, nor that, *Cepheisa*, will I bear:

My word is past to *Pyrrhus*, his to me;

And I rely upon his promis'd faith.

Unequal as he is, I know him well:

Pyrrhus is violent; but he's sincere,

And will perform beyond what he has sworn.

The *Greeks* will but incense him more; their rage

Will make him cherish *Hector's* son.

Ceph. Ah, madam!

Explain these riddles to my boding heart!

Andr. Thou may'st remember, for thou oft hast heard
me

Relate the dreadful vision, which I saw
when first I landed captive in *Epirus*.

That very night, as in a dream I lay,

A ghastly figure, full of gaping wounds,

His eyes a-glare, his hair all stiff with blood,

Full in my sight thrice shook his head and groan'd.

I soon discern'd my slaughter'd *Hector's* shade;

But, oh, how chang'd! ye gods, how much unlike

The living *Hector*! ——— loud he bid me fly!

Fly from *Achilles's* son! then sternly frown'd,

And disappear'd. Struck with the dreadful sound,

I started and awak'd.

Ceph. But did he bid you

Destroy *Astyanax*?

Andr. *Cepheisa*, I'll preserve him;

With my own life, *Cepheisa*, I'll preserve him.

Ceph. What may these words, so full of horror, mean?

Andr. Know then the secret purpose of my soul:

Andromache will not be false to *Pyrrhus*;

Nor violate her sacred love to *Hector*.

This hour I'll meet the king; the holy priest

Shall join us, and confirm our mutual vows.

This will secure a father to my child.

That done, I have no farther use for life:

This

This pointed dagger, this determin'd hand,
Shall save my virtue, and conclude my woes.

Ceph. Ah, madam! recollect your scatter'd reason!
This fell despair all suits your present fortunes.

Andr. No other stratagem can serve my purpose:
This is the sole expedient, to be just
To *Hector*; to *Astyanax*, to *Pyrrhus*.
I soon shall visit *Hector*, and the shades
Of my great ancestors——*Cephisa*, thou
Wilt lend a hand to close thy mistress' eyes.

Ceph. Oh, never think that I will stay behind you!

Andr. No, my *Cephisa*; I must have thee live.
Remember thou did'st promise to obey,
And to be secret; Wilt thou now betray me?
After thy long, thy faithful service, wilt thou
Refuse my last commands, my dying wish?
Once more, I conjure thee, live for me!

Ceph. Life is not worth my care when you are gone.

Andr. I must commit into thy faithful hands
All that is dear and precious to my soul:
Live, and supply my absence to my child.
All that remains of *Troy*; a future progeny
Of heroes; and a distant line of kings,
In him, is all intrusted to thy care.

Ceph. But, madam, what will be the rage of *Pyrrhus*,
Defrauded of his promis'd happiness?

Andr. That will require thy utmost skill: Observe
The first impetuous onsets of his grief!
Use every artifice to keep him stedfast.
Sometimes with tears thou may'st discourse of me;
Speak of our marriage: Let him think I lov'd him;
Tell him my soul repos'd itself on him
When I resign'd my son to his protection.

Ceph. Oh, for a spirit to support my grief!
Is there aught more, before you go for ever?

Andr. Oh, my *Cephisa*! my swell'd heart is full!
I have a thousand farewells to my son;——
But tears break in——grief interrupts my speech——
My soul o'erflows in fondness!——Let him know
I dy'd to save him;——and would dye again.
Season his mind with early hints of glory;

Make him acquainted with his ancestors ;
 Trace out their shining story in his thoughts ;
 Dwell on th' exploits of his immortal father ;
 And sometimes let him hear his mother's name.
 Let him reflect upon his royal birth
 With modest pride ; *Pyrrhus* will prove a friend ;
 But let him know, he has a conqueror's right.
 He must be taught to stifle his resentments,
 And sacrifice his vengeance to his safety.
 Should he prove head-strong, rash, or unadvised ;
 He then will frustrate all his mother's virtue ;
 Provoke his fate ; and I shall die in vain.

Ceph. Alas, I fear I never shall out-live you !

Andr. No more ;—thy tears, *Cephisa*, will betray me ?

Assume a chearful look : But still remember—

[*Flourish within*]

Hark, how the trumpet, with its sprightly notes,
 Proclaims the appointed hour, and calls us hence ;
Heñor, I come, once more a queen, to join thee !
 Thus the gay victim, with fresh-garlands crown'd,
 Pleas'd with the sacred fire's enlivening sound,
 Through gazing crowds, in solemn state, proceeds ;
 And, drest in fatal pomp, magnificently bleeds.



ACT V. SCENE I.

Hermione alone.

WHat have I done ? where am I ?—where is *Pyrrhus* ?
 Ye gods ! what mean these horrors ?—I'm
 undone !

My soul is on the rack !—I cannot bear it !—
 Why do I wander like some guilty ghost ?
 What brought me to this place ? what keeps me here ?
 The court of *Pyrrhus* has no room for me !
 Do I still doubt if I should love or hate him ;

Hard—

Hard-hearted man! how unconcern'd he left me!
Did he once sigh? bestow one pitying look?
Once shed a tear? or speak one soft kind word?
Did he so much as feign one moment's sorrow
To calm my griefs, and mitigate his falshood?
—— Why am I still thus anxious for his life?

Why do I start at his impending fate?
Shall he then live; shall the base traitor live
To laugh at my distress? no, let him perish!
Be quick, *Orestes*—execute my orders!
Alas! my orders? Oh preposterous guilt!
Can I decree the death of him I love?
Was it for this my soul delighted in him?
Was it for this I left my father's court?
Have I then cross'd so many realms and seas,
To murder *Pyrrhus*? ———

S C E N E II.

Hermione, Cleone.

Her. Oh! *Cleone*, help me!
What have I done? Is *Pyrrhus* yet alive?
What say'st thou?—answer me! where is the king?
Cle. Madam, I saw the cruel prince set forward,
Triumphant in his looks, and full of joy.
Still, as he walk'd, his ravish'd eyes were fixt
On the fair captive; while through shouting crowds
She pass'd along with a dejected air,
And seem'd to mourn her *Hector* to the last.

Her. Insulting tyrant! I shall burst with rage!
But say, *Cleone*, didst thou mark him well?
Was his brow smooth? say, did there not appear
Some shade of grief? some little cloud of sorrow?
Did he not stop? did he not once look back?
Didst thou approach him? was he not confounded?
Did he not —— Oh, be quick! and tell me all!

Cle. Madam, the tumult of his joy admits
No thought but love, unguarded he march'd on
Midst a promiscuous throng of friends and foes.
His cares all turn upon *Astyanax*,

Whom he has lodg'd within the citadel,
Defended by the strength of all his guards.

Her. Enough—he dies!—the traitor!—where's *Orestes*?

Cle. He's in the temple, with his whole retinue.

Her. Is he still resolute? Is he determin'd?

Cle. Madam, I fear—

Her. How!—is *Orestes* false?

Does he betray me too?

Cle. A thousand doubts

Perplex his soul, and wound him with remorse:

His virtue and his love prevail by turns.

He told me *Pyrrhus* should not fall ignobly;

Pyrrhus, the warlike son of great *Achilles*.

He dreads the censure of the *Grecian* states,

Of all mankind, and fears to stain his honour.

Her. Poor, timorous wretch! 'tis false! he basely fears.

To cope with dangers, and encounter death:

'Tis that he fears?—Am I bright *Helen's* daughter?

To vindicate her wrongs all *Greece* conspir'd;

For her confederate nations fought, and kings were slain,

Troy was o'erthrown, and a whole empire fell.

My eyes want force to raise a lover's arm

Against a tyrant that has dar'd to wrong me!

Cle. Madam, like *Helen*, trust your cause to *Greece*.

Her. No; I'll avenge myself; I'll to the temple;

I'll over-turn the altar, stab the priest:

I'll hurl destruction, like a whirl-wind round me!

They must not wed! they must not live! they shall not!

Let me be gone! I have not time to lose!

Stand off! with hold me not! I'm all distraction!

Oh *Pyrrhus*, tyrant, traitor, thou shalt bleed.

SCENE II.

Hermione, Cleone, Orestes.

Orest. Madam, 'tis done; your orders are obey'd;
The tyrant lies expiring at the altar.

Her. Is *Pyrrhus* slain?

Orest. Even now he gasps in death.

Our *Greeks*, all undistinguish'd in the crowd,

Flock'd

Flock'd to the temple, and dispers'd themselves.
On every side the altar. I was there:
Pyrrhus observ'd me with a haughty eye;
And, proud to triumph over *Greece* in me,
From his own brows he took the diadem,
And bound it on the temples of his captive.
Receive, said he, my crown; receive my faith;
Mine and my people's sovereign reign for ever.
From this blest hour, a father to your son;
I'll scourge his foes; Henceforward be he filed
The *Trojan* king. I swear it at the altar;
And call the gods to ratify my vows.
His subjects with loud acclamations shook
The spacious dome! our *Greeks*, enrag'd, cry'd out
Revenge! revenge! broke through the thronging press,
And rush'd tumultuous on the unguarded king.
Their eager fury left no work for me.
Pyrrhus a while oppos'd their clashing swords,
And dealt his fatal blows on ev'ry side
With manly fierceness; 'till oppress'd by numbers,
Streaming with blood, all over gash'd with wounds,
He reel'd, he groan'd, and at the altar fell.
Haste, Madam; let us fly! haste to our ships!
They lie unmoor'd; our friends attend us there.

Her. What have they done!

Orest. Madam, forgive their rage.

Frown your vengeance had been more compleat

Had *Pyrrhus* fall'n by me; and had he known,

Hermione chastis'd him by my arm.

Her. Peace, monster, peace!—go tell thy horrid tale

To savages, and howl it out in desarts.

Would'st thou impute to me thy barbarous guilt?

Me would'st thou make the accomplice of thy crimes?

Hence, to thy *Greeks* and boast thy foul exploits;

My soul abhors them! I disclaim the deed!

Be gone! I know thee not! thou fell barbarian!

What had he done; what could provoke thy madness?

T'assassinate so great, so brave a man!

Who set thee on?

Orest. O, grant me patience heaven!

With your own lips did you not curse the tyrant,

Pronounce

Pronounce his death, and urge me to destroy him ?

Her. What if, transported by my boundless passion,
I could not bear to see him wed another ?

Were you t'obey a jealous woman's phrenzy ?

You should have dived into my inmost thoughts ;

My heart, though full of rage, was free from malice ;

And all my anger was excess of love.

Why did you take me at my word ? You saw

The struggles of my soul ; you heard me rave.

You should have question'd me a thousand times,

Yet still have doubted, and still question'd on,

Before you ventured on a life so precious !

Orest. Hear me but speak : — heav'n knows, against
my will —

Her. Why did you not return ? why not consult me
A second time ? and determin'd still,

Again return, and still find new delays ?

What had your rash, Officious *Greeks*, dire blood-hounds,

To do with my revenge ? what drew you hither,

To bring on me the vengeful woes that haunt you ?

Are these the fruits of your detested love ?

Your fatal embassy, your hateful presence

Drove *Pyrrhus* to my rival, and destroys

Both him and me. — He might have lov'd me still,

Had you ne'er interposed, — — — — — Avaunt ! be gone !

And leave me in *Epirus* — — — — — I renounce

My friends, my country, *Greece*, and all mankind :

But chiefly I renounce thee ! monster thee !

SCENE IV.

Orestes, alone.

Am I awake ! where am I ! soft my soul !

Be not too rash — Was that *Hermione* ?

Why should her anger thunder against me ?

Was not this blood shed all by her command ? —

I am indeed a most outrageous monster !

A ruffian, murderer, a base assassin !

And all to please a false, ungrateful woman.

Henceforward let the laws of nations cease ;

And let the pale, that severs right and wrong,

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Things sacred and profane, be broken down:
Gods in their temples, kings upon their thrones,
Are not in safety while *Orestes* lives.
Oh, never more shall my torn mind be healed:
Nor taste the gentle comforts of repose!
A dreadful band of gloomy cares surround me,
And lay strong siege to my distracted soul.

SCENE.

Orestes, Pylades, attended by Greeks.

Pyl. Haste, prince; let us begone; 'tis death to stay.
Andromache reigns queen; she gives th' alarm,
And vows revenge upon the foes of *Pyrrhus*.
The people arm and muster in the streets:
Our *Greeks* will not be able long to guard.
The palace gates, and to secure our flight,
We must be speedy, Sir.

Orest. You may depart;

My friends: ——— *Hermione* and I remain ———
Her cruelty has quite undone me! —go,
And leave me to myself — I'll find her out.

Pyl. Alas, unhappy princess! — she is no more;
Forget her, Sir, and save yourself with us.

Orest. *Hermione* no more! — O all ye Powers!

Pyl. Full of disorder, wildness in her looks,
With hands expanded, and dishevell'd hair,
Breathless and pale, with shrieks she sought the temple,
In the mid-way she met the corpse of *Pyrrhus*:
She startled at the sight; then stiff with horror,
Waken'd from the dire amaze
She rais'd her eyes to heav'n with such a look
As spoke her sorrows, and reproach'd the gods,
Then plung'd a poignard deep within her breast,
And fell on *Pyrrhus*, grasping him in death.

Orest. I thank you, gods — I never could expect
To be so wretched! — you have been industrious
To finish your decrees; to make *Orestes*
A dreadful instance of your power to punish.
I'm singled out to bear the wrath of heav'n.

Pyl. You hazard your retreat by these delays.

The

The guards will soon beset us. Your complaints
Are vain, and may be fatal:

Orest. O my a True friend:

And therefore 'twas I thank'd the bounteous gods.

My My fate is accomplish'd—I shall die content.

Oh Oh bear me hence—blow, winds—

Pyl. Let us be gone.

Orest. The murder'd lovers wait me—hark! they call!
Nay if your welton'd meeks, I'll mingle mine.

One tomb will house us all.

Pyl. Alas! I fear

His ravings will return with his misfortunes.

Orest. I am dizzy!—clouds!—quite lost in utter
darkness!

Guide me, some friendly pilot, through the storm.

I shiver!—Oh, I freeze!—so:—light returns:

'Tis grey dawn.—See *Pylades*! behold!—

I am encompass'd with a sea of blood!—

The crimson billows!—Oh! my brain's on fire!

Pyl. How is it, Sir?—repose yourself on me.

Orest. *Pyrrhus*, stand off! what wouldst thou!

How he glares!

What envious hand has clos'd thy wounds?—have at
thee.

It is *Hermione* that strikes.—Confusion!

She catches *Pyrrhus* in her arms—Oh, save me!

How terrible she looks!—she knits her brow!

She frowns me dead; she frights me into madness!

Where am I?—who are you?

Pyl. Alas, poor prince!

Help to support him.—How he pants for breath.

Orest. This is most kind, my *Pylades*.—Oh, why,

Why was I born to give thee endless trouble?

Pyl. All will go well: He settles into reason.

Orest. Who talks of reason? better to have none,

Than not enough—Run, some one, tell my *Greeks*,

I will not have them touch the king—Now!—now!

I blaze again!—see there!—look where they come;

A shoal of furies;—how they swarm about me!

My terror?—hide me!—Oh their snaky looks,

Hark! how they hiss—see! see their flaming brands!

Now

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they let drive full at me ! how they grin,
shake, their iron whips !—my ears ? what yelling ?
And see *Hermione* !—she sets them on !—
Thrust not your scorpions thus into my bosom ?
Oh !—I am flung to death,—dispatch me soon.
There ;—take my heart, *Hermione* !—tear it out ?
Disjoint me—kill me,—Oh, my tortur'd soul ?—
Pyl. Kind heav'n restore him—*I* for calm :
Oft have I seen him rave ; but never
Quite spent ?—assist me, friends, to bear him off,
Our time is short : Should his strong rage return,
'Twould be beyond your powers to force him hence.
Away, my friends—I hear the portal open.

SCENE VI.

Phœnix, attended by Guards.

fled,—*Orestes* is not here ?—
villians ;—these base, giddy rabble,
whose hands should all have been employ'd with fire
war fleets, flock'd round the dying princess :
and, while they stand agaze, the *Greeks* embark.
Oh, 'tis too plain ?—this sacrilegious murder
Was authoris'd,—Th' ambassador's escape
Declares his guilt.—Most bloody embassy ;
Most unexampled deed ? Where, where, ye gods,
Is majesty secure, if in your temples
You give it no protection ?—see ; the queen.

SCENE VII.

Phœnix, Andromache, Cephisa, with attendants.

Andr. Yes, ye inhuman *Greeks*, the time will come,
When you shall dearly pay your bloody deeds ?
How should the *Trojans* hope for mercy from you,
When thus you turn your impious rage on *Pyrrhus* ;
Pyrrhus, the bravest man in all your league ;
The man, whose single valour made you triumph.
Is my child there ?—

Ceph. It is the corpse of *Pyrrhus* :
The weeping soldiers bear him on their shields.

Andr.

Now

Ill-fated prince! too negligent of life!
 Too unwary of faithless *Greeks*!
 Cut off in the fresh, shining prime of manhood,
 Even in the pride of life, thy triumphs new,
 And all thy glories in blossom round thee,
 The very *Trojans* would bewail thy fate.
Ceph. Alas, then will sorrows never end?
Andr. Oh, ne while I live, my ears
 Will never born to grieve.—
 Give present orders of the funeral pomp: [*When.*
 I let him be rob'd in all his regal state;
 And him every shining mark of honour;
 And let the pile, that consecrates his ashes,
 Rise like his fame, and blaze above the clouds.

SCENE VIII.

Andromache, Cephisa, with attendants.

Ceph. That sound proclaims th' arrival of the *prince*:
 The guards conduct him from the citadel.
Andr. With open arms I'll meet him;—Oh, *Cephisa*,
 A springing joy, mixt with a soft concern,
 A pleasure which no language can express,
 An ecstasy that mothers only feel,
 Plays round my heart, and brightens up my sorrow,
 Like gleams of sunshine in a low'ring sky.
 Though plung'd in ill, and exercised in care,
 Yet never let the noble mind despair.
 When prest with dangers and beset with foes,
 The gods their timely succour interpose;
 And, when our virtue sinks, o'erwhelm'd with grief,
 By unforeseen expedients bring relief.

F I N I S.